5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

CHAPTER XII

THE OCOSINGO VALLEY

The name Ocosingo is Aztec, signifying the "Place of Pines," a name well chosen, for the valley is enclosed in pine-clad hills. When one stands at the southwestern end of the valley it stretches out in front like a huge natural stadium with the high San Martín mountain lying at the back. The northern and southern sides of the valley consist of two parallel rows of mountains, the inner rows being lower than the outer. The interior ranges slope towards the valley and turn nearly vertical cliff walls towards the very narrow valleys that separate them from the exterior mountains (fig. 196).

The interior ranges are broken up in many points, and this the Maya took advantage of, selecting the highest points for pyramids.

The floor of the valley is grass covered, with scattered groups of pine trees. Here and there lie ranches, mostly inhabited by Mexicans, called Ladinos here. The Ladino is, strictly speaking, a man of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, but the Indians use the term to indicate any Mexican or Spaniard who lives in a town or owns a larger ranch. With the name generally goes a certain amount of education, and the ability to read and write.

Ocosingo town now contains only about 500 inhabitants, living in whitewashed brick houses with red tiled roofs. In the center of the town is a Plaza, at one end of which lies the Palacio Municipal, and at the other end a huge Spanish Colonial church. In front of the church is the public fountain; the water and news supply of the town. All day long girls come here to fill large clay jugs with cool water, led down from the San Martín mountain through an underground canal.

Half of the Plaza is planted with trees, which surround a dilapidated music pavilion, without which no self-respecting Mexican village could exist.

The houses that face the Plaza all have colonnades where one may walk in the shade, and where families bring their rocking chairs in the evenings to sit and watch the crowds of as many as twenty-five men and women who walk around the pavilion, or to look at the horses and cows that feed on the grass growing exuberantly between the paving stones of the Plaza.

The Ocosingo Valley and many smaller valleys adjoining formerly supported large herds of cattle and had considerable trade.

[Text continues on p. 247]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

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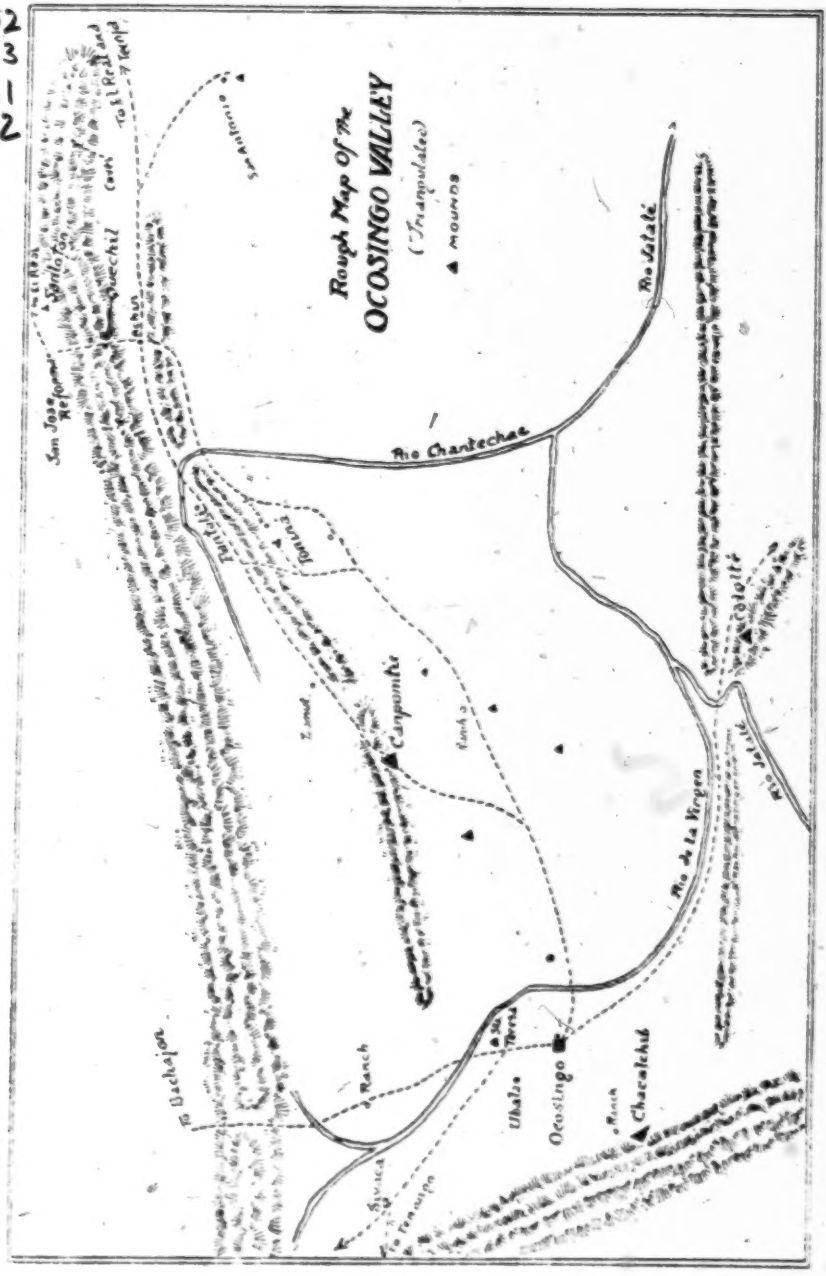

FIG. 108—Ocosingo Valley. (Triangulation). Scale 1:80,000.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Revolutions have since destroyed the herds, and the town now has only a small local trade in sugar and rum.

All goods are transported on mule-back over bad trails. Main trails run to Yajalon, San Cristóbal las Casas, and Comitan. Minor trails connect with Tenosique in Tabasco, a ride of five or six days through uninhabited forests. Other small trails lead into the heart of the forests along the Usumacinta river, where there are a few mahogany camps, fourteen days distance on a good mule.

The Spanish Conquerors had quickly discovered the richness of the soil and taken possession of it. Therefore, we find but a few Indians around Ocosingo, save at the small town of Sivacá, entirely inhabited by Tzeltal-speaking Indians. From there we secured our labourers, who were summoned by the municipal president and worked for us at the regulation pay of 50 centavos per day. Ocosingo holds sway over the native towns of Sivacá, Tenango, Oschuc, San Martín, and Bachajon. The municipality commands the Indians for all kinds of work, and in many ways lives on what can be pressed from them. As a consequence, the good people of Ocosingo are anything but popular among the Indians, though it appears that the man then in charge, Señor Simon Leon, was quite friendly towards them, and therefore well liked.

Geologically, the Ocosingo Valley is a syncline, the valley bottom and the interior mountain ranges being of a coarse red sandstone, and the exterior ranges of limestone. The axis of the valley runs approximately N-80-W to S-80-E, and Ocosingo town is located at an altitude of 900 meters above sea level.

As we rode into the village, La Farge discovered a stone block, carved with hieroglyphs, set in the pavement of the sidewalk, an excellent reception for archaeologists.

Our first concern was to find quarters, which we located in a house on the corner of a street leading into the Plaza. Soon our equipment was unloaded, and while we unpacked, the Ladino guide we had acquired in Bachajon went to his house to order food for us.

The restaurant and meal were a surprise, though not pleasant. In a room with a rotten board floor, the plaster falling off the walls, and a huge box full of saints, we were served fried eggs and black beans by an old woman with a large goitre. Though nothing in the house appeared to be either particularly exclusive or clean, the Ladino family seemed to resent that we sat down at the table with our chief guide, the trusty old Indian, Lázaro, now called "Tata" by us.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

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"Tata" means something like father, and the Indians use the word as a remark of respect to old men. Our old Lázaro had by now become a part of our outfit, always working, looking after the welfare of our animals and ourselves. We had come to regard him as a friend, and the name "Tata" grew out of nowhere, as the natural thing to call him.

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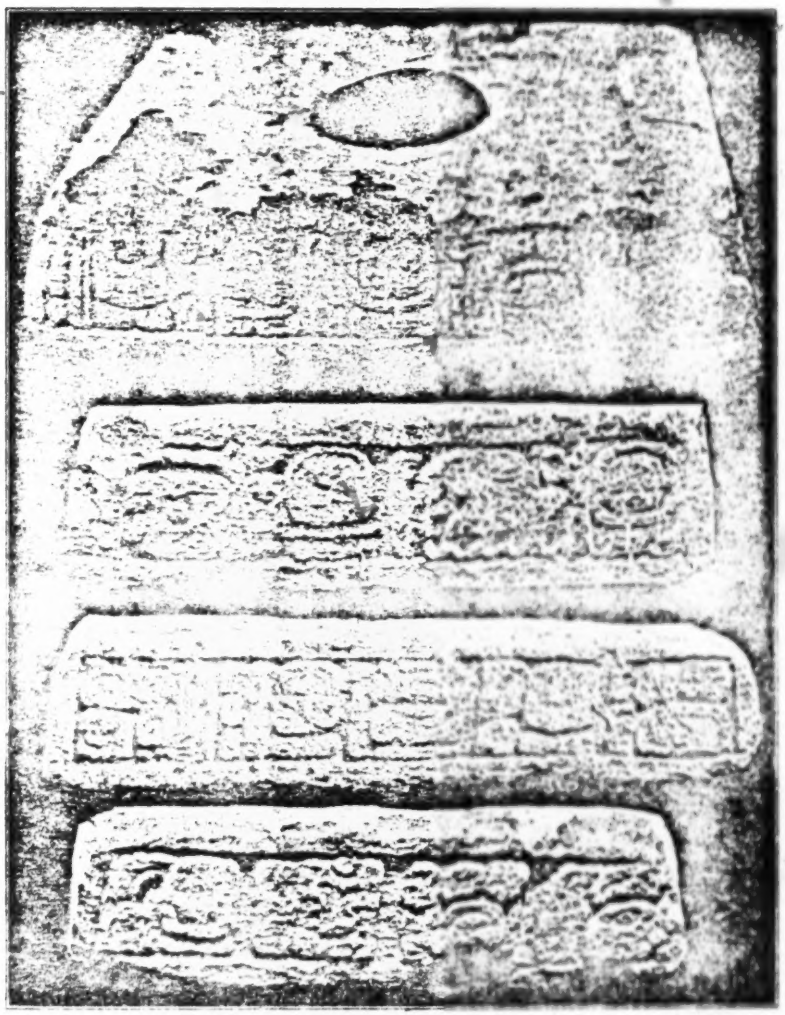

FIG. 197.—Toniná, Chis. Monument T-7.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

The Municipal President was visited, and as soon as he saw our credentials, arranged for labourers to be furnished from Sivacá, and sent to the ruins of Toniná nearby, to clear the bush for our work. Then we drew the stone discovered by La Farge (see figs. 214-215).

During the evening we talked with many of the inhabitants, and were told of several more carved stones to be found in other parts

FIG. 198.—Toniná, Chia. Drawing of Monument T-7.

of town. Previous Municipal Presidents had paved the streets with cut stones from the Toniná ruins. As a matter fact, it appears, that from the very founding of the Spanish town of Ocosingo, the inhabitants have occupied themselves mainly with hauling rocks from the ruins to the village.

Our search for carved monuments led us into strange places, and amusing situations. In the corner of a house belonging to the Ger-

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

172 114 man, Dr. Schmeling, was a stone with rows of hieroglyphs somewhat similar to the one first discovered. Behind the church, in a combination back yard and pig sty, we located three large stone figures, two of them with inscriptions. Then we heard of a stone said to be partly buried in the ground on an old site. When we arrived at this place, the owner of the lot appeared very drunk, and insisted that we pay him $25.00 for permission to see and draw the stone. He was very noisy so we retired, and the next morning returned with an order from the municipal president giving us authority to do what we wanted to with the stone, as it was government property (see figs. 197-198). The laws of Mexico state that all ancient buildings and monuments belong to the nation. Monuments cannot be excavated or removed from the country without government permission. The Tulane Expedition had permits to explore, and due to these permits we received much help from all officials. All objects we discovered were drawn to scale and photographed, but nothing was removed.

[122] [126]

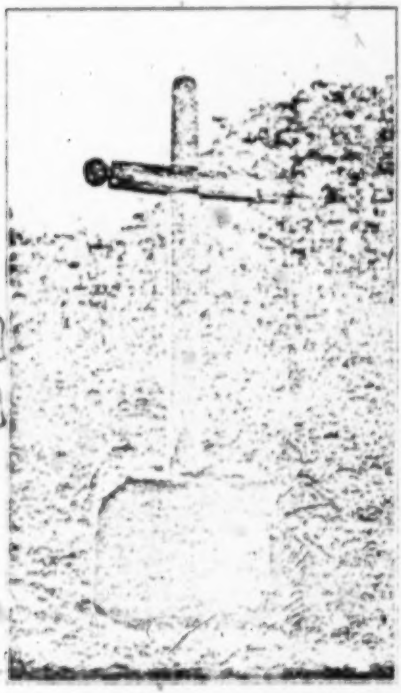

FIG. 199.—Ubala Ranch, Chis. Upper half of Monument T-8 with modern cross.

Outside the village there was said to be a large stone with carvings. La Farge went out in search of it led by our somewhat imbecile local guide. For some time they wandered around without finding anything, but finally the guide led him to what he said was another stone, a large square block with a circular hole in the center, in which was stuck a huge wooden cross (fig. 199). The stone had been dragged to its present position by our guide's family, and used as a base for the cross of his grandmother's grave. His family did not wish us to find the monument, as they feared we would excavate it; but our imbecile thought he had to produce something for his pay, so he took La Farge to the stone.

[126] La Farge made a sketch of the principal inscription, which showed that it began with one of the so-called Initial Series, most

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

important in Maya Chronology. The writer went to draw the monument, but could not finish it the same afternoon as it began to get dark. The following morning the work was continued and we found that a part of the monument was missing. While working, the owner of the land arrived and told us that there was another stone nearby. This turned out to be the missing fragment, and when the two parts were placed together they carried the Initial Series date 9-12-10-0-0 9 Ahau 13 Zotz, or 422 A. D., after our reckoning.

This was an important discovery, and we persuaded the owner of the Ubala ranch, where we found the monument, to bring the two stones together. His intention was to use the lower part of the monument, which had a large hole in its centre, as a rim to a water tank.

We found a total of nine carved stones of different sizes in and around Ocosingo. All were of the typical yellow sandstone common to Toniná monuments, and there is little doubt but that they all come from these ruins.

Our stay in Ocosingo was very delightful. The children of the village eagerly hunted monuments for us, and our arrival made a boom in the local market. Usually the inhabitants spend their time passing a few pennies from one to the other. One day A makes bread and sells it to B, and the next day B sells bread to A. Now we added a few cents to the city capital.

On the day of Corpus Christi the women, with their heads wrapped in black shawls, went to church many times; the men did less work than usual; and the children played baseball on the Plaza. A quaint phraseology, a mixture of American baseball words and Spanish swearing, cheered the play.

While drawing one of the monuments behind the church, we heard an organ playing inside. Suddenly the music swung into some cheerful opera tune, later to return to serious religious music. We had the feeling that whoever was playing suddenly felt gay and happy and decided that the good people of Ocosingo did not know what the music was anyway, but thought anything coming from a church organ was religious, so why not be happy for a short moment?

Indians went back and forth over the Plaza, often filling the door of our room to watch the strangers. Ladinos would come to pay their respects and offer help, and both the Padre and the school teacher often came in for a chat. There was an extraordinary feeling of peace in the little town, a silence which became more notice-

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

able when broken by the clattering of horses hoofs against the paving stones.

From the Plaza one can see a great part of the valley and surrounding mountains. When the sun in the morning falls on the San Martín mountain, one's attention is attracted by a spur on this mountain which strongly resembles a pyramid. We asked about this and were told that it actually was an ancient mound. Therefore, one morning, we rode to the foot of the San Martín.

Reaching a small ranch, we left our horses behind and ascended on foot. A spur of the mountain had in ancient times been levelled and shaped to the form of an immense truncated pyramid, rising in terraces.

We had heard that there were caves in the mountainside, and that every year, on the 3rd of May, the Indians come here to worship the god of the mountain. Soon we reached a small cave, or rock shelter, and upon entering saw that a tunnel led into the dark. This we followed, with lighted candles, into a small cave, and there on the floor we found signs of a small altar.*

We took great pains not to disturb anything on the altar, returning to the mouth of the cave, and emerged into the glaring sunlight. We then climbed to the top of the pyramid, and found a large level area in the center of which stood a small mound. On top of the mound Indians had erected a wooden cross and at its foot we found bunches of pine needles, also remnants of burnt copal incense. Evidently this also was a place of Indian worship.

Sitting on top of the mound we had the whole Ocosingo valley at our feet. The red roofs of the town lay 500 meters below us. The top of the pyramid, called Chacalchib, is 1,440 meters above sea level. Far away we could see two other hilltops that likewise had been turned into pyramids. On the northern edge of the valley lay Campomtik, and further away on the same side we could distinguish the ruins of Toniná. On the southern side of the valley was the mountain-pyramid called Cololté. All these places were later visited.

The valley floor spread out before us. Here and there lay small ranches, and patches of pine forest. Several groups of mounds were easily distinguished, as those of Santa Teresa just outside Ocosingo on the trail to Bachajon. At the head of the valley lay Sivacá, the Indian village.

On the level top of the pyramid were rows of stones, indicating old house foundations, but though we made a careful search, we found no monuments.

*For Description, see Chapter XV.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Slowly we descended towards the valley, enjoying the magnificent view. The country we were to work in for the following weeks lay before us like a map. About half-way down we encountered another cave, in which we also found an Indian altar. This time the offerings were placed before a small cross, crudely made of wood.

La Farge, as usual, was busy collecting data on the Indians' life and customs, and while he paid a visit to the village Sivacá, the writer set out to explore the Cololté pyramid, sometimes called Hocuchupac, which was said to have a stone idol on it. We also heard that the good inhabitants of Ocosingo were afraid to go to the mountain top, not knowing what the Indians might do.

FIG. 200—Cololté, Chis. Altar on top of the Cololté Pyramid.

Our local guide was eventually persuaded to take me to the ranch of a Ladino boy, by name Cenón, on whose property the pyramid was located.

From Ocosingo we rode along the Rio Grande de la Virgen until it joined the Jataté River, which we crossed and soon came to the ranch of Cenón, who was in the field, but came out when we called. Though the pyramid, as stated, was on his property, he was not eager to take me to it, and when he finally agreed, he first armed himself with an old 30-30 Winchester.

Following long, narrow, pine ridges we approached the pyramid. It was beautiful country with scattered pine and grass below.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

Finally we reached the foot of a steep hill, on top of which the idol was supposed to be. This hill sloped gradually towards the north and the valley. Its southern side was a vertical cliff wall. It was difficult to climb to the top as the ground was slippery underfoot from its carpet of pine needles, but it was well worth the trouble. We reached the top, and there before us stood a small altar, built of rough stones (fig. 200). On the centre of the altar stood the idol, a small figure, 64 cm. high, carved out of yellow sandstone, and of the same type as those idols we had already seen, and knew to come from Toniná. The idol was badly weathered—only its sandaled feet were distinguishable. It was without a head, and had no carved hieroglyphs. Before it stood crude clay bowls in which were the charred remains of copal incense; rows of crude candlesticks were planted between the stones; and offerings of coloured strips of paper and small bunches of pine needles lay scattered around.

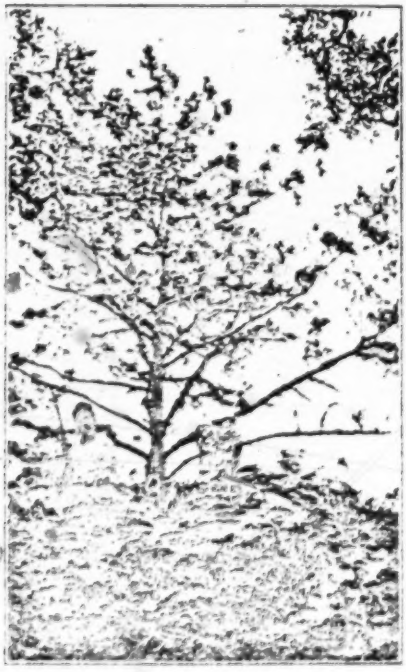

FIG. 200—Cololté, Chis. Altar on top of the Cololté Pyramid.

Four hundred years of Spanish rule, four hundred of Catholic missionizing, had not been able to stamp out the worship of the ancient gods in the ancient way. Here I stood, the first white man to behold this altar, a white man with a deep interest in the ancient history of this country. I could not help feeling that the ancient gods were still living, and that I was nearer to the ancient times at that moment than I had ever been before. As I turned and saw just across the valley the mighty pyramids of Campomtik, and Toniná, the powerful city that once ruled over the valley, I realized that before me lay buried the ruins of a small State within the huge Maya area—a State born of Maya culture, using Maya hieroglyphs, speaking a Maya dialect, but at the same time expressing itself through its art in a way distinct from any other part of the Maya area.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

We have divided Maya history in two groups, the Old Empire and the New Empire. Of the history of the New Empire we know a considerable amount, but our knowledge of the Old Empire history is scant. We know the area in which it flourished as a whole, like knowing Greece without being aware of Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. Here in front of me lay one of the first hints of the subdivisions of the Old Empire. Knowledge will advance, and soon we shall be able to tell about the rise and decline of states and cities, to revive the history of the foremost people of ancient America.

Nearly due north across the valley lies the Campomtik pyramid. La Farge visited it while we worked at Toniná. It, too, is a remodeled mountain top, and as it is covered with grass, it stands out sharply against the forest-clad hills. It consists of a series of terraces with a depression which has stone-faced terraces and floor. From the valley bottom the hill rises 280 meters, of which 105 meters (325 feet) have been terraced. Broken pottery is found in various places on the hillside, and on the top now stands two wooden crosses, set there by the Indians. The name Campomtik means "much yellow incense." Incense was burned on the hilltop until quite recently. At such times they burned great fires, and shot off many rockets bought in Ocosingo. Finally the celebrations got too fervent for the Catholic Father, and he had the Indians driven away by the town officials. Generally, though, the Padres let the Indians alone when they celebrate in honour of the ancient gods (fig. 201).

Outside Ocosingo, where the trail divides, one going to Bachajon, the other to Sivacá, lies a group of mounds called Santa Teresa. Rumors that Indains had buried church treasures here after an uprising, led the townspeople to make a large excavation. According to some people in Ocosingo, they found a small wooden sanctuary, and a beautiful clay bowl with a fish on its lid. This bowl later was bought by Seler.*

It is remarkable how persistent are rumors of buried treasures. Every Ladino expects to find "dinero," money, in any mound, and they are usually sadly disappointed. Also, most of these people believe that we find money, else why should we dedicate so much time to our explorations? We had a case where one man offered to go fifty-fifty with us if we would explore a mound on his lands. The whole mound at Santa Teresa has been dug through, and it is told in Ocosingo that the excavators found, not money, but a small wooden sanctuary with a saint inside. We hear every day, when among the Ladinos and Mexicans, stories of church bells of solid gold, and cocks that crow at midnight on top of the mounds.

*Seler, E., 1901. Fig. 279.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

172 114 At last we had drawn all the carved stones in Ocosingo, so, preceded by a gang of Tzeltal-speaking Indians from Sivacá, we rode out to the ruins of Toniná. The road led through the centre of the valley, crossing the Rio Grande de la Virgen over a bridge which had recently been reconstructed after the rebels of the last revolution [137] had destroyed it. We were riding through rolling grass-covered country with clusters of pine trees and small groups of mounds scattered here and there. The Campomtik pyramid stood out sharply against the surrounding dark pine forest. We turned off from the main trail to the north and soon came in sight of the ruins, which Stephens, eighty-five years before, had come over the same trail to visit. Several explorers had been before him, but none had

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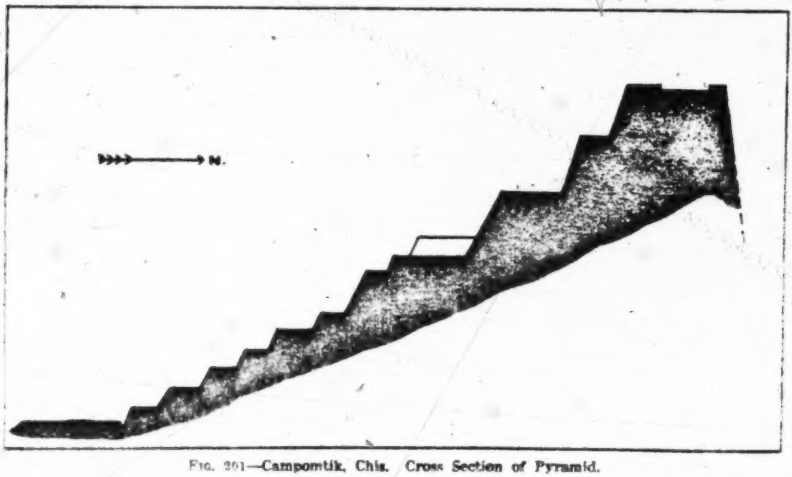

Fig. 201—Campomtik, Chis. Cross Section of Pyramid.

172 114 given such a vivid description of the ruined city we were now to explore.

Following the northern mountain range, we came to the Plaza at the foot of the ruins, and rode up to the first terrace as Stephens had done. There we tied our horses and proceeded on foot. Don Aureo Cruz, owner of the land on which the ruins lie, guided us through a part of the ruins that had never been recorded. We reached the Temple of the Wooden Lintel, saw the "winged globe" drawn by Catherwood, then entered the sanctuary. Before us was the wooden lintel which has been lying over the door for nearly 1500 years, and which made Stephens marvel. Then and there we drank a small tumbler of the local cane wine in memory of John Lloyd Stephens and F. Catherwood, among the first to break the trails we

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

172 114

are now following in our search for the history of the ancient Maya.

After crossing a small stream, we rode up to the ranch of Don Aureo Cruz. The ranch consisted of a two-room, palm-thatched house with adobe walls, and a dilapidated hut which served as kitchen, across a small courtyard. We had spent our days and nights in so many strange places that we hardly noticed this, and the more time we spent with Don Aureo and his family, the better we liked it. One could not have found a more kind and courteous family. What they possessed was ours. Don Aureo kept watch over our workmen, and helped us in our investigations from early to late. His wife and daughters were constantly preparing special dishes and cakes for us.

114

While we were getting off our animals, we saw the extremely pretty eldest daughter of the house, a beauty of about 17 years with long black hair and fiery dark eyes, strewing the floor of the main room with fragrant, fresh pine needles. We were ushered into this room and were at once offered fresh milk and several handfuls of small clay idols by Don Aureo. In one corner of the room was a table and benches, in the opposite corner an altar to San Antonio of Toniná. A few days before our arrival a fiesta had been celebrated in honour of this saint, and the altar was still decorated with garlands of coloured paper, and a paper band with gilt letters saying "Viva San Antonio, 1925."

Our stay at Don Aureo's house will not soon be forgotten. The evenings we shall especially remember, when we sat outside the hut and listened to Don Aureo's tales of the Indians, while his pretty daughters were busy flirting with our guides, and with us too. A pine stick fire lit up the walls of the houses and flickered over the brown faces of our hosts and our Indian labourers, who sat just back of us, chatting in their own strange language and enjoying the local cigars we had given them. Out in the dark our animals could be heard grazing, and now and then a pig or a dog would approach the fire, to be driven away with shouts and sticks.

[pp. 258-324 not processed]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

000 tóbal. The altitude above sea level varies from 2,000 meters in the hilly per-
133 iphery to 1,720 meters in the valley where the town center is located. Ejido
423 lands acquired in the 1930s have extended the boundaries of the township
632 to lower lands at 1,500 meters altitude.
183

Pre-Conquest settlement patterns in the Chiapas highlands were charac-
• 172 terized by independent communities occupying the headlands around flat-
361 bottomed valleys (R. M. Adams 1961:341). The choice of sites seems to have been based on defense against invading Toltec or other conquest groups (Calnek 1962:25). The sites investigated by Adams and Culbert (R. M. Adams 1961:347) in Amatenango belong to the late-Classic and early post-Classic period. They were marginal to the centers of Maya civilization in the Yucatán peninsula and Guatemala. Test excavations in the modern town indicate that it was occupied only after colonial times.

175 The town of Amatenango del Valle is first mentioned in the year 1528
361 when it was included in tribute lists with both the Nahuatl name, Ama-
161 tenango, and the Tzeltal name, Tzobontaghal (Calnek n.d.). The tribute
162 lists of 1761 include 33 families in the *parcialidad*, or Spanish political unit based on an indigenous settlement, of Zacatepec in Amatenango and 75 families in the parcialidad of Amatenango (Trens 1957 I:217). The first census done in 1778 shows a total population of 576, with 374 men and 202 women. The racial breakdown is listed as 8 white, 2 negro and mestizo, and 560 Indians (Trens 1957:221). By 1824, the population had increased to 1,620. The present population of 3,179 represents natural growth as well as inclusion of additional outlying settlements added in the latter part of the nineteenth century and during the 1930s with the enactment of the land reform act. The population changes indicate steady but not great increases. The capacity of the town to incorporate additional population has probably passed its peak. The present trend is for out-migration to newly opened ejido lands.

161
632
[423]

128 The subdivisions of the town, which provide the framework for admin-
632 istration by the national government, are included in Table 1.

361 *The center.* The center of Tzo'ontahal is called the "center [or
[563] navel] of the world." The residents of the center, with the exception of the schoolteacher's family, are all Indian. Although the town center forms

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 5]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

People with lands in hot country recount that during droughts the Indians from the neighboring town of Chamula have held rainmaking fiestas for which they solicit contributions from other Indians.

The Chamulteco came to us and said, "Let all of us who have milpas contribute five pesos for a fiesta." He brought the candles. In the little hill there the people brought drums and flute. We ate chickens and drank liquor. For eleven hours he prayed, and in the afternoon it rained.

The *kuriketik*, rural inhabitants of the colonia of San Vicente who migrated to Amatenango from Chanal, have no irrigated lands and depend directly on rainfall throughout the growing season. Indians of the center know of their practice of sticking their digging sticks into the ground with the points toward the sky "to puncture the clouds" when they have planted their milpa, but they do not imitate this practice. Control over the supply of water in the irrigated lands has apparently led to the neglect of supernatural appeals even where the canals do not supply water. Under pressure of extended drought, they will resort to spiritual intercession through Chamula or Oxchuk practitioners in whom they have some faith.

Acquiring the protection of the gods does not obviate the practical activities necessary in the cultivation of crops. Fiestas for the saints are a repayment for services rendered in watching over the milpa. The sponsorship of fiestas for the saints by the community ensures the protection for all of the crops, and general crop failure due to drought or high winds is explained as a result of mismanagement of these community-wide fiestas. The offering of candles to the spiritual owner of one's own milpa is a kind of individual insurance policy for future crops as well as a repayment for the gift of the corn harvest. The peasant notion of surplus value is implicit in this reciprocal relation: the payment, or gift, of two candles to the milpa spirit is far less than the value of the harvest. But the account is balanced by the expenditure of this surplus in communal fiestas.

Pottery Production

Making pottery has been a speciality of the town since pre-Conquest days. The old site of the town contains sherds of pottery which is remarkably similar in texture, design, and form to the pottery made now.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

000 animals. The domesticated animals include dogs, horses, burros, 231 cattle,[1] hogs and chickens.

311 To summarize, the villages are located in the same ecological zone. In addition to this, both villages have extended their cultivated lands into the lowlands, down to about 1,500 meters above sea level, where semi-tropical and tropical products are grown (Kaplan, 1956-57, 1958; Wagner, 1959, Part II, Section 5).

Archeology

• 172 Although the Chiapas Highlands seem to have been occupied from the late Pre Classic, Local Phase Sak (Adams, R.; 1961:342) the first evidence of occupation within the valleys belongs to the Late Classic and Early Post Classic. A few archeological sites of this period are located on the tops of small hills and ridges around the flat-bottomed areas in which today's towns are located.

Adams (1961) interprets the sites as having been independent communities, characterized architecturally by a lack of attention to ceremonial structures, conspicuous absence of sculpture, and a certain emphasis on fortifications and defensive positions, indications of some sort of warfare. Surrounding the sites there is evidence of small hamlets and of agricultural terracing, but

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[231] [177] [648] [1]Cattle were introduced in the area a long time ago, but were not adopted by the Indians of Amatenango and Aguacatenango until very recently. They are more and more of a problem for the milpa agriculturalist, because with the system of open range grazing, the cattle constantly invade the milpas, and are a continuous threat for the villager, plus a source of friction between Indian and Ladinos, especially cattle ranch owners.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

172 the density of occupational refuse suggests to him that the populations were concentrated on the hill sites themselves.

During the Post Classic period the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were apparently unoccupied. This correlates with a shift in the total settlement pattern of the area, from small well defended valleys to large, more strategic positions such as the ones on the Plateau Summit of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Ethnohistory

175 Historical documents tend to confirm that the valleys of Amatenango and Aguacatenango were not occupied by any large nucleated settlements upon the arrival of the Spaniards. They do not appear in the first accounts of the Conquistadores. The earliest reference to Amatenango is 1586 and to Aguacatenango 1605, perhaps indicating that the former inhabitants were reducidos (concentrated in villages by the Spaniards) somewhat earlier. These first references occur in connection with grants of encomienda (i.e., they were tributaries of a Spanish lord, or Encomendero) (Simpson, L., 1929:1950).

175 361 621 648 Both communities were formed, as far as we can tell from the scanty evidence in the primary sources, by the Spaniards, in agreement with the policy of reducciones (concentration of population in villages) of the encomiendas initiated in the sixteenth century (Calnek, 1961, Appendix III). Each one of these settlements was formed of two separate pueblos, one incorporated within the other, which later appear in other documents as parcialidades.